

# *News from the Wyoming Department of Health*

Tuesday, October 27, 2009

## **Two More Flu-Related Deaths Reported in Wyoming**

Two more flu-related deaths of state residents have been reported to the Wyoming Department of Health.

Flu contributed to the deaths earlier in October of both an adult male (Influenza A, further subtype not confirmed) and elderly male (Influenza B, not H1N1). Both were Laramie County residents and had underlying health conditions linked with higher risk of severe illness.

Flu activity continues to climb in Wyoming, is widespread across the state and is mostly due to the H1N1 flu strain. More influenza cases have been reported to the department since May than the total in any flu season over the past ten years. Influenza symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headaches and fatigue. Some patients also report diarrhea and vomiting.

Of the total 2,522 reported flu cases in Wyoming since late May, 587 have been confirmed as swine flu cases. Most other cases were not subtyped. Over the same timeframe, the department has received reports of 77 Wyoming hospitalizations in connection with the virus. The department expects the number of actual flu infections around the state to be much higher, because most ill persons do not seek medical care or are not tested. Specific swine (novel H1N1) flu counts only reflect cases confirmed by specialized lab testing as the H1N1 strain as part of the department's ongoing surveillance activities.

Actions recommended to slow the spread of illness include:

- When available, get immunized with both a swine flu and a seasonal flu vaccine.
- In general, people who develop influenza-like illness should stay home from work, school or travel until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever. Those who are severely ill (such as having trouble breathing) should seek medical care.
- Avoid contact with ill persons.
- Covering noses and mouths with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing, and throwing used tissues in a trash can.
- Frequent hand washing with soap and water or the use of an alcohol-based hand gel.

More information about flu in Wyoming is available online at [www.health.wyo.gov](http://www.health.wyo.gov) .

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